

Rare birds in Morocco: report of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (2001–2003)

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Les oiseaux rares au Maroc: rapport de la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine (2001–2003). Après les deux premières synthèses triennales parues dans le Bulletin de l'African Bird Club (Bergier *et al.* 2000, 2002a), ce nouveau rapport détaille les 137 données analysées entre 2001 et 2003, dont 99 ont été acceptées. Quatre espèces / sous-espèces ont été signalées pour la première fois au Maroc: Goéland de la Baltique *Larus fuscus fuscus*, Mergule nain *Alle alle*, Martinet cf. ramoneur *Chaetura* sp. cf. *pelagica* et Corbeau familier *Corvus splendens*. La mention du Mergule nain est probablement la première documentée pour l'Afrique continentale.

The two first triennial reports of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC) appeared in *Bull. ABC* in 2000 and 2002. This third report includes 137 records for 2001–03 (see Table 1). Ninety-nine have been accepted, including four species/subspecies new for Morocco: Baltic Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*, Little Auk *Alle alle*, a *Chaetura* sp., probably Chimney Swift *C. pelagica* and House Crow *Corvus splendens*. The Little Auk record is probably the first documented for continental Africa. Annual reports for the period were published in *Porphyrio* (Bergier *et al.* 2002b, 2003a) and in *Go-South Bulletin* (Bergier *et al.* 2004).

The updated list of species considered by MRBC is at <http://www.ifrance.com/Go-South/> and includes true vagrants (i.e. species with fewer than 30 records) and rare or little-known species whose current status is inadequately known. We strongly urge visiting birdwatchers to submit descriptions of relevant species to the MRBC Secretary: Prof. Jacques Franchimont, Quartier Abbas Lemsadi, rue n°6, n°22, 50.000 Meknès V.N., Morocco.

Presentation of data

The presentation of data follows the pattern of MRBC reports for 1995–97 and 1998–2000 (Bergier *et al.* 2000, 2002a). For all species, the following sequence has been used.

- English and scientific names
- Status according to the following codes:
 - RB Resident
 - MB Migrant breeder
 - OB Occasional breeder
 - FB Former breeder
 - PM Passage migrant
 - WV Winter visitor
 - OW Occasional winter visitor, otherwise migrant (MB, PM)
 - AV Accidental visitor (fewer than 30 records)
 - F(AV) Former accidental visitor (not recorded since 1899)
 - ? Indicates doubt concerning relevant status
- Details of: year, MRBC file number, region (see map), site, number of birds (one unless otherwise stated), age, sex, other data if applicable, date(s) of observation, and recorder(s) name(s)
- Comments

Table 1. Number of records analysed by the MRBC in 2001–03
Tableau 1. Nombre de données examinées par la CHM en 2001–03

	1990	1991	1996	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total	Accepted	Rejected
Seventh report (2001)					1	10	38			49	34	15
Eighth report (2002)	1	1		1		2	15	30		50	35	15
Ninth report (2003)			1					10	27	38	30	8

Rif

- I.1 Tanger Peninsula
- I.2 Jbala
- I.3 High Rif
- I.4 Southern Rif
- I.5 Eastern Rif

North Atlantic Plains & Hills

- II.1 Rharb
- II.2 Préfif
- II.3 Saïs
- II.4 Zemmour
- II.5 Zaër

Middle Atlantic Plains & Plateaux

- III.1 Chaouïa
- III.2 Doukkala
- III.3 Abda
- III.4 Chidma
- III.5 Plateau des Phosphates
- III.6 Tadla
- III.7 Rehamna
- III.8 Srahna
- III.9 Haouz & Jbilet

Central Plateau

- IV Central Plateau

Middle Atlas

- V.1 Western Middle Atlas
- V.2 Eastern Middle Atlas

High Atlas

- VI.1 Haha
- VI.2 Western High Atlas
- VI.3 Central High Atlas
- VI.4 Eastern High Atlas

Eastern Morocco

- VII.1 Plains of Eastern Morocco
- VII.2 Hills of Eastern Morocco
- VII.3 High Moulouya
- VII.4 Middle Moulouya
- VII.5 High Plateaux
- VII.6 Saharan Atlas

Souss

- VIII Souss

Anti-Atlas

- IX.1 Western Anti-Atlas
- IX.2 Central Anti-Atlas
- IX.3 Eastern Anti-Atlas
- IX.4 Sarhro

East Saharan Morocco

- X.1 South Eastern Sahara
- X.2 Tafilalet
- X.3 Dadès-Draa
- X.4 Middle Draa

West Saharan Morocco

- XI.1 Lower Draa
- XI.2 Tarfaya
- XI.3 Saquiat Al-Hamra
- XI.4 Oued Ad-Deheb

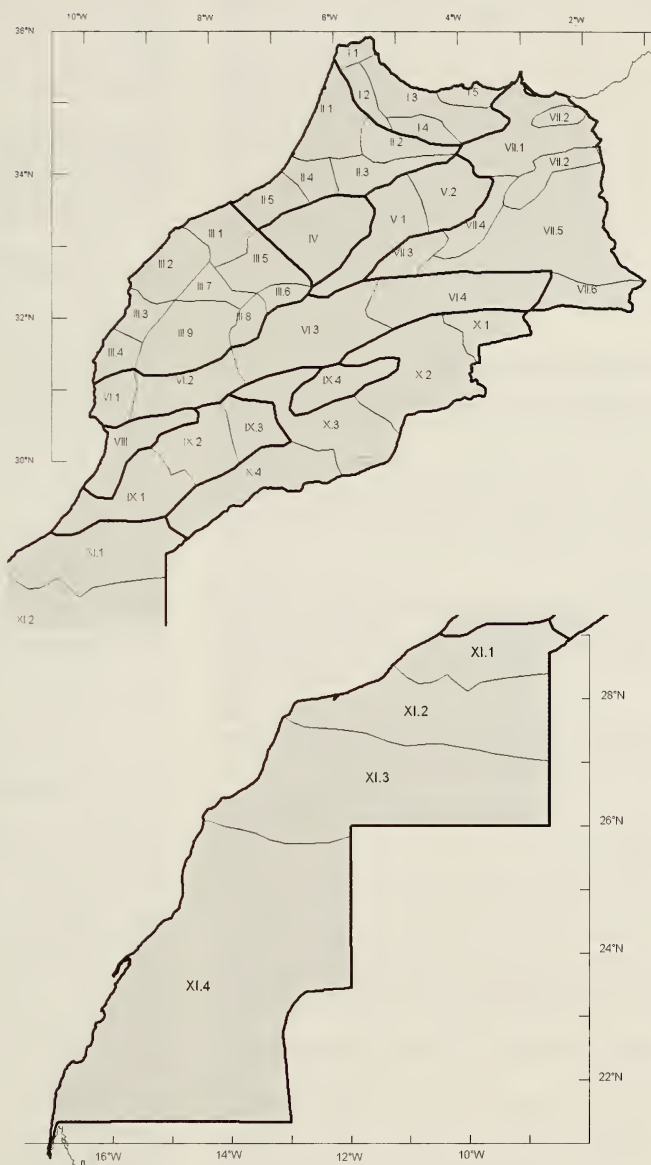


Figure 1. Map showing the regions of Morocco used in this report (see also Thévenot *et al.* 2003)
 Carte avec les régions du Maroc utilisées dans ce rapport (voir également Thévenot *et al.* 2003)

For accidentals, six numbers in brackets follow the status code. The first two indicate the number

of records in the files of the Centrale Ornithologique Marocaine prior to the formation

of MRBC, and the number of birds involved. The second pair indicate the number of records accepted by MRBC and published in the previous triennial reports, and the number of birds involved. The last pair indicates the number of records accepted by MRBC in 2001–03, and the number of birds involved. For rare or little-known species, only the two last pairs are presented. The systematic list follows the sequence of species for which details are required by MRBC (www.ifrance.com/go-south/lists/Liste_Oiseaux_Maroc_Annexe4.pdf).

List of accepted records

Great Northern (?) Diver *Gavia* sp. cf. *immer* AV (3/3, 1/1, 1/1)

1997 (97/29) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Melilla harbour, immature/first-winter, 28 December 1997–11 January 1998 (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

This diver was probably a Great Northern, which is an accidental visitor to the Strait of Gibraltar (Irby 1895, Finlayson 1992) and the Atlantic coast. This record would be the first on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco; further east, in Algeria, the species has been reported in the 19th century but not recently (Isenmann & Moali 2000).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* PM, OW (-/-, 1/70+, 1/9)

2002 (02/05) Souss, Agadir harbour, nine, 16 January (A. B. Kristensen *et al.*)

Manx Shearwater is an uncommon passage migrant along the Atlantic coast of Morocco and is only occasionally recorded in winter (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* AV (2/2, 0/0, 1/1)

2002 (02/31) Tafilalt, Merzouga, subadult, 29 March (R. Cruse *et al.*)

Third record for Morocco. The first was at Cap Blanc in southern Western Sahara; the second was also in a pre-desert area, at Barrage Mansour Eddahbi, near Ouarzazate, 250 km east of Merzouga, on 13 February–3 April 1983 (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* PM, WV, FB, MB? (-/-, 0/0, 1/1)

2003 (03/18) Souss, Massa estuary, 10 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

Included in the MRBC list as it is now rare at all seasons. This bird was apparently first seen on 3

March (*Birding World* 16: 107) and was seen again on 4 April (A. Blomdahl *et al.*). Only two previous records at Massa (29 December 1987–1 January 1988 and 8 April 1990), but the species has reached West Africa (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Great White Egret *Egretta (Ardea) alba* OW, PM (-/-, 7/7, 9/12)

2000 (00/19) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Kert estuary, Nador, 8 October, photo, subspecies *alba* (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

2000 (00/27) Souss, Souss estuary, 9 March (H. & O. Karhu)

2001 (01/17) Eastern High Atlas, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, 16 March, subspecies *alba* (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)

2001 (01/47) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Mohamed V, 17 September, adult (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

2002 (02/30) Dadès-Draa, Barrage Mansour Eddhabbi, Ouarzazate, 26 March (R. Cruse *et al.*)

2003 (03/05) Rharrb, Lower Loukkos Marshes, Larache, two adults, 23 March (J. Franchimont & F. Touati Malih)

2003 (03/16a) Rharrb, Lower Loukkos Marshes, Larache, 31 March (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

2003 (03/16b) Rharrb, Lower Loukkos Marshes, Larache, three, 15 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

2003 (03/20) Dadès-Draa, Barrage Mansour Eddhabbi, Ouarzazate, 13 April (A. Blomdahl *et al.*)

Probably now a regular winter visitor to northern Morocco, especially in Plains of Eastern Morocco and in Rharrb. South of the Atlas, the species is rare, especially inland; the record at Barrage Hassan Addakhil near Errachidia is the first there, and those at Barrage Mansour Eddhabbi, near Ouarzazate, only the third and fourth there (previous records were in March 1967 with two on 2 February 2003: Vernon 1972, *Dutch Birding* 25: 130). Elsewhere, there is only one other record from Dadès-Draa (Oued Draa, at Zagora, in April 1981) and two in Tafilalt at Aoufous and Merzouga (possibly the same) in December 1989 (Thévenot *et al.* 2003). The bird at the Souss estuary on 9 March 2000 was probably the same as that on 18–19 April 2000 (Bergier *et al.* 2002a).

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* AV (14/22+, 3/3, 2/2)

1990 (90/03) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Tleta Boubker, male, 17 January (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

2001 (01/32) Rharrb, Sidi Bou Rhaba, female, 15 September (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

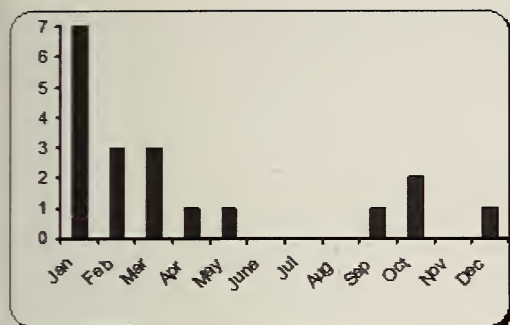


Figure 2. Accepted records of Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (n=19) in Morocco, by month. For records spanning more than one month, only the first date is considered.

Répartition mensuelle des mentions acceptées de la Sarcelle à ailes bleues *Anas discors* (n=19) au Maroc. Pour les mentions couvrant plus d'un mois, seulement la première date est prise en compte.

The 18th and 19th records in Morocco, the second near the Mediterranean coast and the sixth at Sidi Bou Rhaba. That on 15 September was the earliest ever recorded in Morocco: previous observations were all between 10 October (Dejonghe 1981) and 5 May (N. J. Redman), with most in winter (Fig. 2).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* AV (9/13, 2/2, 3/3)

2001 (01/05) Saïs, Douyiet, male, 6 April (J. Franchimont & A. El Ghazi)

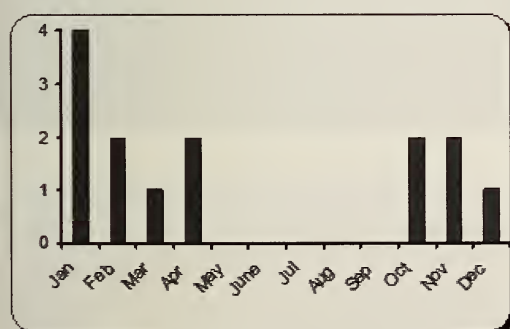


Figure 3. Accepted records of Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (n=14) in Morocco, by month. For records spanning more than one month, only the first date is considered.

Répartition mensuelle des mentions acceptées du Fuligule à collier *Aythya collaris* (n=14) au Maroc. Pour les mentions couvrant plus d'un mois, seulement la première date est prise en compte.

2001 (01/38) Souss, Massa estuary, female, 11 April (G. E. Dobbs; Fig. 17)

2003 (03/17) Souss, Massa estuary, female, 10 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

The Douyiet record is only the third inland; those at the Massa estuary are the third and fourth at this site, with the female there on 11 April 2001 first reported on 31 March (*Birding World* 14: 150). These three records are the latest dates for this duck, which was previously recorded in

Captions to figures on page 110

Figure 7. Jbel Sarhro near Tazzarine, May 2004 (P. Bergier). Most Isabelline Wheatears *Oenanthe isabellina* have been recorded in pre-desert areas of south-east Morocco.

Jbel Sarhro, près de Tazzarine, mai 2004 (P. Bergier). La plupart des Traquets isabelles *Oenanthe isabellina* ont été observés dans les zones prédésertiques du sud-est du Maroc.

Figure 8. Oued El Malleh near Tissint, Middle Draa, May 2004 (P. Bergier). Many sandgrouse, including Lichtenstein's *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, come to drink at the large pools.

Oued El Malleh, près de Tissint, Moyen Draa, mai 2004 (P. Bergier). Les mares attirent de nombreux gangas, y compris des Gangas de Lichtenstein *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, qui viennent y boire.

Figure 9. The Souss estuary, May 2004 (P. Bergier). One of the Moroccan hotspots along the Atlantic shore.

L'estuaire du Souss, mai 2004 (P. Bergier). Un de points chauds marocains le long de la côte atlantique.

Figure 10. The tiny oasis of Lemseyed, in the riverbed of the Saquiat Al-Hamra, October 2003 (P. Bergier). A pair of Barbary Falcons *Falco pelegrinoides* nested nearby.

La petite oasis de Lemseyed, dans le lit du Saquiat Al-Hamra, octobre 2003 (P. Bergier). Un couple de Faucons de Barbarie *Falco pelegrinoides* nichait dans les environs.

Figure 11. Agadir, bay and harbour, October 2002 (P. Bergier)

La baie et le port d'Agadir, octobre 2002 (P. Bergier)

Figure 12. Barrage Mansour Ed-Dahbi, Ouarzazate, November 1995 (R. Vernon)

Figure 13. Erg Chebbi and its surrounding, Merzouga, October 1974 (F. Fornaion)

Erg Chebbi et ses environs, Merzouga, octobre 1974 (F. Fornaion)

Figure 14. The surrounding countryside of the Oued Draa south of Goulimine, May 1994 (P. Geniez)

Les environs de l'Oued Draa au sud de Goulimine, mai 1994 (P. Geniez)



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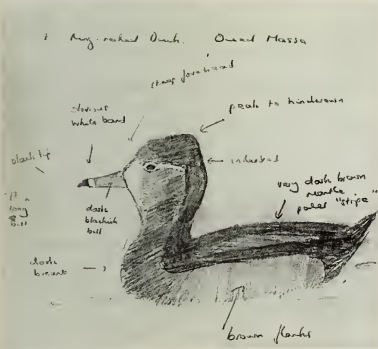
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Figure 15. Marshes of the Lower Loukkos, Larache, April 1993 (P. Beaubrun)

Marais du bas Loukkos, Larache, avril 1993 (P. Beaubrun)

Figure 16. The Moulouya estuary, September 1993 (P. Beaubrun)

L'estuaire de Moulouya, septembre 1993 (P. Beaubrun)

Figure 17. Adult female Ring-necked Duck / Fuligule à collier *Aythya collaris*, Massa estuary, 11 April 2001 (G. E. Dobbs)

Figure 18. Roseate Tern / Sterne de Dougall *Sterna dougallii*, Oued Tamri estuary, 16 January 2002 (J. S. Hansen)

Figure 19. Richard's Pipit / Pipit de Richard *Anthus richardi*, Oued Massa, 1 January 2001 (H. Dufourny)

Figure 20. Male Isabelline Wheatear / Traquet isabelle *Oenanthe isabellina*, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, Errachidia, 16 March 2001 (G. Willem)

Morocco only between 19 October and 13 March (Thévenot *et al.* 2003) (Fig. 3).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* AV, OB? (69/78, 5/29, 2/2)

2001 (01/36) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Tleta Boubker, female, 6 October (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

2001 (01/48) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Mohamed V, female, 25 November (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

These records possibly involved the same individual, as the two sites are only c.50 km apart. Records have decreased since 1998, following commencement of an eradication policy in many European countries and, to a lesser extent, Morocco (at least two have been shot since 1994: Hughes 2003), as part of efforts to conserve White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*. An Action Plan (2003–05) to control Ruddy Ducks in Morocco was developed at a workshop in Rabat in October 2003. The only wetland where the species is still regularly seen is Douyiet in Saïs, but records there are not required by MRBC; maximum counts were of three in 2001 (pair and adult male, 6 April), two in 2002 (adult male and female, 8 March), two in 2003 (adult male, 18 November), with just one sighting in 2004 (an adult male, 24 February 2004) (Bergier *et al.* 2003b, Franchimont *et al.* 2004).

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* RB (-/-, 0/0, 1/1)

2001 (01/45) Western High Atlas, Oukaïmeden, adult, 8 October (A. Godino Ruiz & I. Molina Prescott)

This vulture has undergone a dramatic decline in Morocco since the 1980s, with only 20 records during the 1990s (15 in the High Atlas and five in the Anti-Atlas: Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* AV (24/30+, 1/1, 1/1)

2000 (00/30) Lower Draa, 28 km south of Goulimine, adult male, 8 March (H. & O. Karhu)

This observation, the second in Lower Draa, accords with previous records in Morocco, i.e. between late September to mid May, with a peak in spring, in March–April.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* RB (-/-, 1/1, 1/1)

2000 (00/28) Souss, Taroudant, adult, 15 April (G. E. Dobbs)

Only one record previously accepted by MRBC (April 1999: Bergier *et al.* 2002a). Both are from Argan forest in the Souss Valley, which is the core of the species' range in Morocco, where it appears on the verge of extinction.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* RB (-/-, 3/3, 4/5)

1991 (91/01) Western High Atlas, Argana, adult, 3 October (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

1996 (96/44) Tafilalt, Oued Bou Kechba, East of Oum Jerane, immature, 22 February (P. Yésou & M. South)

2001 (01/39) Souss, 20 km east of Taroudant, 12 October (M. Gaillard & P. Malenfant)

2001 (01/40) Souss, 25 km east of Taroudant, two, 13 October (M. Gaillard & P. Malenfant)

The Souss and adjacent foothills of Western High Atlas and Anti-Atlas lie at the heart of this eagle's breeding range in Morocco, where only a few are recorded annually. In Tafilalt, there are only 19 previous records: in February (two), March (three), April (eight), May (five) and September (one), and the species' status is poorly understood (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* AV (18/c.29, 0/0, 3/4)

2000 (00/25) Western Middle Atlas, Dayet Aoua, male and female, 22 April (R. Sane)

2002 (02/25) Western Middle Atlas, near Col du Zad, first-summer female, 9 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

2002 (02/32) Souss, between Taroudant and Agadir, adult female, 1 April (R. Cruse *et al.*)

The 19th–21st records. Seventeen are in spring (25 March–10 June) and four in autumn (22 August–24 September), and they come from the following regions (north-west to south-east): Tangier Peninsula, High and Eastern Rif (four); Rharrb, Saïs and Zaër (three); Western Middle Atlas (two); High Moulouya (one); Haouz (one); Western and Eastern High Atlas (two); Souss (four); Central Anti-Atlas (one); Tafilalt (two); and Dadès-Draa (one). Another spring record has never been submitted to MRBC (a male at Errachidia, 24 April 2000: *Bull. ABC* 8: 64–65).

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* RB poorly known (-/-, 27/32, 17/19)

2001 (01/07) Tafilalt, Aoufouss, photo, 17 March (G. Willem & V. Schollaert)

2001 (01/09) Eastern High Atlas, Rich, pair, 17 March (G. Willem & V. Schollaert)

2001 (01/20) Saquiat Al-Hamra, Lemseyed near Layoun, pair, 26 April (J. Franchimont *et al.*)

- 2001 (01/21) **Saquiati Al-Hamra**, Boujdour, 26 April (A. El Ghazi & J. Franchimont)
- 2001 (01/42) **Haha**, Cap Rhir, photo, first-summer, 3 May (T. Clarke & P. Morris / Birdquest)
- 2001 (01/52) **Haha**, Cap Rhir, photo, adult, 3 May (T. Clarke & P. Morris / Birdquest)
- 2002 (02/04) **Tafilalt**, oasis 5 km north of Merzouga, 8 January (A. B. Kristensen *et al.*)
- 2002 (02/12a) **Dadès-Draa**, Tamafout, 5–6 March (P. Yésou & M. South)
- 2002 (02/12b) **Dadès-Draa**, Hdida, 6 March (P. Yésou & M. South)
- 2002 (02/14) **Sarhro**, Tazzarine, 28 March (P. Bergier & A. El Ghazi)
- 2002 (02/16) **Dadès-Draa**, between Zagora and Agdz, 30 March (Y. Créau)
- 2002 (02/26) **Eastern High Atlas**, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, 10 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)
- 2003 (03/04a) **Eastern Anti-Atlas**, Tiouine, adult, 22 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
- 2003 (03/04b) **Souss**, Massa, adult, 24 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
- 2003 (03/11) **Sarhro**, Tazzarine, adult, 5 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)
- 2003 (03/12) **Sarhro**, Tagdilt, adult, 7 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)
- 2003 (03/23) **Haha**, Tamri, photos, 6 April (A. Blomdahl *et al.*)

All records are from regions where the species' presence is well documented, except those in Saquiati Al-Hamra (Western Sahara), where its status is still inadequately known. The observation by Blomdahl *et al.* on coastal cliffs just north of Tamri (03/23) probably involved a mixed pair, Barbary Falcon and Peregrine *F. peregrinus brookei*.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* PM, OW (-/-, 2/8+, 3/3)

- 2001 (01/02) **Dadès-Draa**, Ouarzazate, 23 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
- 2002 (02/19) **Souss**, Massa estuary, 5 April (B. & D. Swann)
- 2003 (03/07) **Doukkala**, Oualidia, adult, 12–13 April (J. Franchimont & F. Touati Malih)

The 2001 record is slightly early, but the others are well within the spring migration pattern of Spotted Crake in Morocco.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* AV (0/0, 2/2, 1/1)

- 2001 (00/24) **Souss**, Souss estuary, breeding-plumage adult, 11 June (C. Bowden & H. Culmsee)

Third record. All were in spring at the Souss estuary; the two previous on 24–25 April 1997 (H. Dufourny, M. & P. Ridenour: Bergier *et al.* 2000),

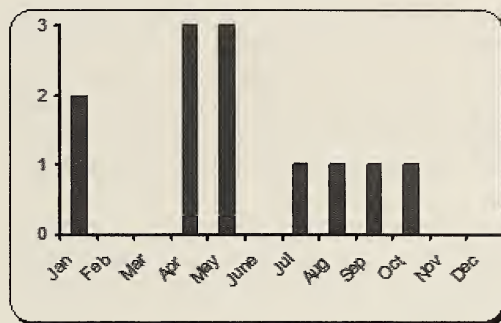


Figure 4. Accepted records of Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* (n=12) in Morocco, by month.

Répartition mensuelle des mentions acceptées du Bécasseau falcinelle *Limicola falcinellus* (n=12) au Maroc.

and 16–17 May 1999 (C. Bowden & B. Dawson: Bergier *et al.* 2002a).

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* AV (8/12, 3/6, 1/1)

- 2001 (01/54) **Souss**, Souss estuary, juvenile, 2 October (M. Gaillard & P. Malenfant)

Twelfth record in Morocco, the fourth in autumn and seventh at the Souss estuary. Previous records were mainly in spring (April–May: six) with three in autumn (July, August and September) and two in winter (January) (Fig. 4); mainly near the Atlantic coast in Souss (seven), Tarfaya (one) and Chaouia (one), but also twice inland, in Haouz and Dadès-Draa.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* AV (4/5, 1/1, 1/1)

- 2001 (01/13) **Doukkala**, Oualidia, 12 April (V. Schollaert, L. & H. Jottrand)

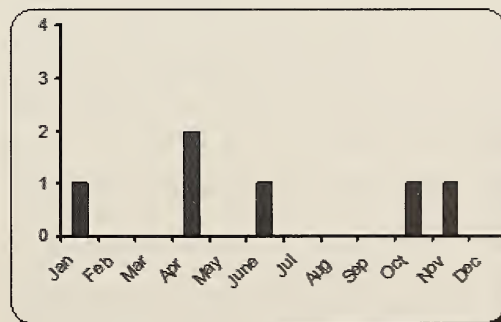


Figure 5. Accepted records of Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (n=6) in Morocco, by month.

Répartition mensuelle des mentions acceptées du Petit Chevalier *Tringa flavipes* (n=6) au Maroc.

Sixth record in Morocco, the second in April (Fig. 5) and the third at Oualidia.

Long-billed (?) Dowitcher *Limnodromus* sp. cf. *scolopaceus* AV (3/4, 1/1, 1/1)

2002 (02/36) Souss, Souss estuary, 22 November (A. Smith *et al.*)

Fourth record of a dowitcher at the Souss estuary. Probably a Long-billed, but Short-billed Dowitcher *L. griseus* could not be completely eliminated.

Baltic Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus* AV (0/0, 0/0, 2/1)

2001 (01/26) Souss, Souss estuary, adult, 19 March (H. Haass *et al.*)

2001 (01/14) Souss, Souss estuary, adult, 8 April (V. Schollaert, L. & H. Jottrand)

First documented record in Morocco. This bird stayed at least three weeks at the Souss estuary. Accidental in Morocco, but two other subspecies are abundant (*L. f. graellsii*) to scarce (*L. f. intermedius*) passage migrants and winter visitors (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* WV (-/-, 3/4, 1/1)

2002 (02/03) Souss, Agadir harbour, first-winter, 16 January (A. Hagerman *et al.*)

Rare winter visitor to Morocco, this is only the fourth record since the MRBC was created.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides* AV (3/3, 0/0, 1/1)

2003 (03/14) Souss, Souss estuary, subadult, 8 April–early May (V. Schollaert *et al.*, C. Koller)

The fourth and southernmost record in Morocco; previous records involved a second-winter at the Bou-Regreg estuary on 28 December 1979 (Beaubrun 1980), a first-winter at the Loukkos estuary on 4 October 1980 (Beaubrun 1980) and another first-winter at Ceuta on 16 January 1987 (A. Cambelo: Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* AV (22/22, 11/15, 1/1)

2003 (03/15) Rharrb, Sebou estuary, first-summer, 15 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

The first record since 2000 (Bergier *et al.* 2002a). The species was previously seen at least once per annum in 1992–99 with maxima of five records in 1992 and 1995 (Bergier *et al.* 2002a, Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

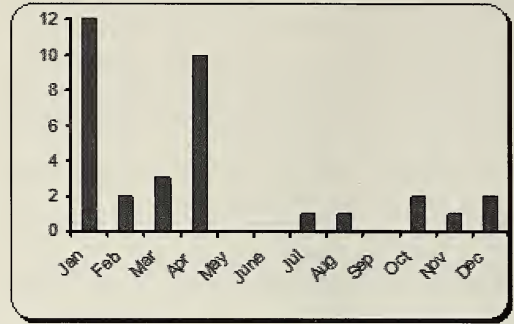


Figure 6. Accepted records of Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (n=34) in Morocco, by month. For records spanning more than one month, only the first date is considered.

Répartition mensuelle des mentions acceptées du Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis* (n=34) au Maroc. Pour les mentions couvrant plus d'un mois, seulement la première date est prise en compte.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* PM (-/-, 2/4, 1/1)

2002 (02/06) Haha, Tinkert estuary, adult, photo, 16 January (A. B. Kristensen *et al.*; Fig 18)

Only the second winter record for Morocco; the previous one was at Sebkh Bou-Areg on 11 January 1980 (Thévenot *et al.* 1981). Roseate Tern is more usually sighted off the Atlantic coast, in April–early July and August–October, but is rarely seen from shore (Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* PM, OW (-/-, 1/1, 1/1)

2003 (03/19) Souss, Souss estuary, 15 April (A. Blomdahl *et al.*)

Second record, at the same place and almost on the same date as one in 1999 (Bergier *et al.* 2002a).

Little Auk *Alle alle* AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

2002 (02/35) Rharrb, Moulay Bouselham, moribund, 18 November (A. Smith *et al.*)

First substantiated record in Morocco. Urban *et al.* (1986) considered the species to be a rare visitor to Morocco and Finlayson (1992) as a scarce vagrant in the Strait of Gibraltar, but no details were presented to support either statement. No other fully documented records for Africa are available, except those mentioned by Martín & Lorenzo (2001) for the Canaries.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge* AV (c.10/c.10, 0/0, 1/1)

2002 (02/24) Haha, Cape Rhir, 28 February (M. Deutsch & F. Bindrich)

Accidental in winter. A few records are mentioned for the Strait of Gibraltar (Irby 1895, Finlayson 1992), but none on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. Four previous records of singles on the Atlantic coast: Casablanca in January 1967 (Granier 1970), near Cap Rhir on 23 December 1983 and 6 December 1985 (Thévenot *et al.* 2003), and at the Sebou estuary on 20 November 1990 (Pouteau 1991). Morocco is south of the species' usual winter range, although it occasionally reaches Cap Blanc in northern Mauritania (Lamarche 1988).

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii* RB (-/-, 0/0, 1/c.10)

2003 (03/08) Middle Draa, Tissint, c.10, 9 April (J. Franchimont & F. Touati Malih)

Some 10 km south of Tissint, the Oued El Malleh (or Oued Tissint) appears to be a good spot for this species—a previous record (02/01) submitted to MRBC was not accepted due to the lack of a sufficiently detailed description.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* WV, PM (-/-, 1/1, 4/6)

2000 (00/23) Rharrb, Moulay Bousselham, 28 December (H. Dufourny *et al.*)

2001 (01/22) Lower Draa, Goulimine, two, 18 March (N. Haass *et al.*)

2001 (01/23) Dadès-Draa, Boumalne Dadès, 15 March (N. Haass *et al.*)

2001 (01/53) Tarfaya, Khnifiss lagoon, two, 18 December (A. El Ghazi *et al.*)

A rare winter visitor and passage migrant: most records are during migration periods (late September–November and March–mid April) and from the Atlantic coast. Only three previous sightings on the Mediterranean coast (Moulouya estuary), and only four inland (Haouz, Dadès-Draa, Tafilalt and Saharan Atlas): that on 15 March 2001 at Boumalne Dadès is therefore remarkable. Records 00/23 and 01/53 are the 19th and 20th winter records (ten in December–January), and 01/53 is the third at Khnifiss lagoon.

Chimney (?) Swift *Chaetura* sp. cf. *pelagica* AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

2001 (01/33) Souss, Massa estuary, 21 September (A. van den Berg *et al.*)

First record of this New World genus in Morocco. Submitted as *C. pelagica* but other *Chaetura* species could not be wholly eliminated, meaning that the record was accepted as *Chaetura* sp. cf. *pelagica*. Presumably part of the large arrival of Chimney Swifts in Western Europe in autumn 1999: the 14 records (*Birding World* 14: 506) included the first two in Spain (de Juana 2002). There is also a record in 2001 from the Canaries (Lanzarote, 2 January: *Birding World* 15: 25), the second for the archipelago (the first was on Tenerife in 1997: Martín & Lorenzo 2001).

Plain (?) Swift *Apus* sp. cf. *unicolor* AV, OB?, WV? (-/-, 1/6, 2/c.23)

2002 (02/33) Saquiat Al Hamra, Barrage of Layoune, c.20, 23 October (P. Bergier & J. P. Reitz)

2002 (02/34) Oued Ad-Deheb, 117 km south of Boujdour, three, 28 October (P. Bergier & J. P. Reitz)

Definite proof of the species' presence in Morocco is still lacking, even if it is very probable that the small black swifts recorded on the southern Atlantic coast are of this species. These October records fit the departure pattern of Plain Swifts from the Canaries (Martín & Lorenzo 2001). Vernon (2002) summarised records of these swifts in Morocco.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* MB, PM (-/-, 2/4, 1/6+)

2003 (03/24) Eastern Middle Atlas, Ras el Oued, Taza, 6+, 19 June (J. Franchimont & F. Touati Malih), still present 13 July (A. El Ghazi)

This record was far north of the only current breeding area in Morocco, around Imlil in the Western High Atlas, south of Marrakech. White-rumped Swift had been observed once previously in the same region (Jbel Tazekka, spring 1974: Thévenot *et al.* 2003) and breeding seems likely. Jbel Tazekka lies between the species' only two known breeding areas in the Western Palearctic, i.e. southern Andalusia north of the Strait (c.250 km to the north-west) and Western High Atlas (c.500 km south-west).

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula* RB (-/-, 4/71+, 1/2)

2001 (02/13) Sarhro, Tiguerma, two, 29 March (P. Bergier & A. El Ghazi)

Only separated with difficulty from the local breeding race of Crag Martin *H. rupestris rupestris* (or *H. r. theresae*, as sometimes separated). Their breeding ranges may overlap but their respective distributions

are poorly known. A summary of those characters useful in their separation is at www.ifrance.com/go-south/pictures/Hirundo_rupestris_obsoleta.pdf.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* WV (-/-, 3/17, 3/4)

- 2001 (01/01) Souss, Massa, two, photos, 1 January (H. Dufourny *et al.*; Fig. 19)
 2001 (01/03) Souss, Massa, 25 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
 2002 (02/07) Tafilalt, Merzouga, first-winter, 8 January (A. Hagerman *et al.*)

First records since 1996. Five of the six observations accepted by MRBC are from cultivation near the Massa estuary, where the species is probably a rare but regular winter visitor. Most previous records are from coastal wetlands, the majority along the Atlantic coast, from Rharb in the north to the Mauritanian border, with a few along the Mediterranean coast in eastern Morocco. Only three records inland (Saïs, Zaer and Souss) and 02/07 is the first for Tafilalt.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* WV (-/-, 1/1, 1/2)

- 2000 (00/20) Central High Atlas, Tamtatoucht, two, 17 December (D. Jerez Abad & R. Ramirez Espinar)

Dunnock is now considered a very rare but probably regular winter visitor to the north of the country, but this is the first record in the High Atlas.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* PM (-/-, 21/22+, 15/19)

- 2001 (01/04) Dadès-Draa, Ouarzazate, 23 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
 2001 (01/10) Dadès-Draa, Ouarzazate, 13 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)
 2001 (01/11) Sarhro, Alnif, three, 15 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)
 2001 (01/12) Tafilalt, Merzouga, 16 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)
 2001 (01/15) Eastern High Atlas, Rich, two, 17 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)
 2001 (01/16) Eastern High Atlas, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, photo, 16 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem; Fig. 20)
 2001 (01/18) Tafilalt, Erfoud, 16 March (G. Willem)
 2002 (02/10) Souss, Igoudar, 21 February (F. Bindrich)
 2002 (02/11) Tafilalt, Café Yasmina, Merzouga, 24 February (F. Bindrich)
 2002 (02/22a) Tafilalt, Bou Bernous, 28 March (S. Carter *et al.*)
 2002 (02/22b) Eastern Anti-Atlas, Tazenakht, 2 April (S. Carter *et al.*)

- 2002 (02/27) Tafilalt, Derkaoua, Merzouga, two, 11 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)
 2002 (02/28) Eastern Anti-Atlas, Tazenakht, 13 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)
 2003 (03/03) Dadès-Draa, Barrage Mansour Eddhabi, Ouarzazate, 22 February (P. Lansdown *et al.*)
 2003 (03/13) Tafilalt, Erfoud, 5 April (V. Schollaert *et al.*)

Most records in 2001 were already presented by Schollaert & Willem (2001), but that at Barrage Hassan Addakhil had previously been erroneously stated to have been on 17 March. This wheatear is probably a regular, albeit rare, passage migrant through south-east Morocco.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* AV / WV? (15/20+, 3/4, 1/1)

- 2003 (03/10) Souss, Oued Souss, Inezgane, 3 April (K. Offord *et al.*)

A rare and irregular winter visitor to north-west Morocco, but only accidental south of the High Atlas (this is the third such record, the two previous were in Souss and Lower Draa: Thévenot *et al.* 2003). Also accidental in the Canaries, where there are only four recent records (Martín & Lorenzo 2001).

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* PM (-/-, 1/1, 1/1)

- 2003 (03/06) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Moulouya estuary, 17 April (B. Ma re)

In the 1950s, this warbler was a common and regular passage migrant in spring and autumn at the Moulouya estuary (Brosset 1956). The above record is only the second since MRBC was created in 1995, and the species is now a real rarity in Morocco.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* RB, WV? (-/-, 0/0, 4/5)

- 2001 (01/34a) Western Middle Atlas, Ifrane, two, 13 September (A. van den Berg *et al.*)
 2001 (01/34b) Western Middle Atlas, Michliffen, 13 September (A. van den Berg *et al.*)
 2001 (01/37) Dadès-Draa, Ouarzazate, 13 March (V. Schollaert & G. Willem)
 2001 (01/49) Souss, Massa estuary, 25 February (P. Lansdown)

Probably a rare breeder (restricted to the Tangier Peninsula) and passage migrant, but status poorly known as the species has only recently attracted the interest of birdwatchers, and incorporated into the MRBC list to gain fuller knowledge of its status and temporal pattern. In addition to the

records above, we are aware of several other sightings, suggesting that Iberian Chiffchaff is probably not uncommon in Morocco on both passages. Svensson (2001) recorded it in Souss (Massa, two, 7 April 2001), in Haouz (Marrakech, three, 27 March 2001) and Tafilalt (Erfoud, single, 4 April 2001), and V. Schollaert (*in litt.*) in Rharb: Merja Bargha, one, 16 September 1999; Zaër: Sidi Bettache, two, 16 September 2001; Doukkala: Oualidia, one, 12 April 2001; Saïs: Boufekrane, c.10, 19 September 1999; Western Middle Atlas: between Khénifra et Ifrane, two, 14 September 1999; Aguelmane Sidi Al, one, 17 September 2001; Eastern Middle Atlas: Taza, one, 1 March 2001; Eastern High Plateaux: Ain Beni-Mathar, two, 24 September 1999; Western High Atlas: Oukaïmeden, one, 31 March 2001; Dadès-Draa: Ouarzazate, one, 28 March 1999, 12, 14 March 2001 and two, 2 April 2001. Appears rare in winter: P. Lansdown paid special attention to chiffchaffs at this season in Morocco and could only locate one *ibericus*, at Massa, in February 2001.

Balearic Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator badius* PM (-/-, 0/0, 1/3)

2001 (01/35) Souss, Aoulouz, two adults and a juvenile, 19 September (A. van den Berg *et al.*)

This subspecies is rarely reported and MRBC welcomes claims. The first autumn record for Morocco.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1) 2002 (02/37) Tangier Peninsula, Tangier harbour, adult, 25 December (J. Franchimont)

First record for Morocco and the Maghreb, but House Crow has already been seen in the Canaries—on Fuerteventura in autumn 2000 (an escapee) and Gran Canaria on 31 December 2002. Well known for its ability to 'hitch' lifts on boats, that the first record of House Crow in Morocco was in a harbour is unsurprising.

Records not accepted

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophrys* 2001 (01/50) Haha, Cape Rhir, immature, 15 October. **Fea's / Zino's Petrel** *Pterodroma feae* / *P. madeira* 2001 (01/43) Haha, Cape Rhir, 2 October. **Cape Verde Shearwater** *Calonectris (diomedea) edwardsii* 2001 (01/24) Souss, Souss estuary, two, 19 March. **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* 2003 (03/09) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Moulouya estuary, corpse, 18 April. **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* 2000

(00/26) Rharb, Larache, 7 February. 2002 (02/18) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Mechra Homadi, 5 May. **Great White Egret** *Egretta (Ardea) alba* 2003 (03/01) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Barrage Mohamed V, two, 12 January. **African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* 2000 (00/29) Oued Ad-Dehab, Dakhla, photos, adult, 26 November. **American Wigeon** *Anas americana* 2000 (00/21) Souss, Barrage Imi el Khneg, 28 November. 2001 (01/51) Rharb, Sidi Bou-Rhaba, male, 9–11 December. **Hybrid Blue-winged Teal × Shoveler** *Anas discors × Anas clypeata* 2003 (03/02) Saïs, Douyiet, male, 14 February. **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* 2001 (01/30) Tangier Peninsula, Ksar Sghir, August. **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* 1999 (99/47) Souss, 25 km west of Oulad Berehil, immature, 30 September. **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* 2001 (01/41) Souss, 25 km east of Taroudant, 14 October. 2002 (02/23) Rharb, 10 km north of Moulay Bousseham, immature/second-year, 28 February. **Barbary Falcon** *Falco pelegrinoides* 2001 (01/08) Eastern High Atlas, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, 17 March. 2001 (01/19) Dadès-Draa, Ouarzazate, 7 April. 2001 (01/25) Tafilalt, Meski, pair, 11 March. 2002 (02/15) Doukkala, Cape Beddouza, 23 March. 2002 (02/17) Western High Atlas, Ilfilte between Tizi-n-Ticka and Ouarzazate, 21 February. 2002 (02/21) Saharan Atlas, Figuig, 12 April. **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* 2002 (02/29) Rharb, Lower Loukkos marshes, Larache, 28 February. **Ross's Gull** *Rhodostethia rosea* 2001 (01/46) Souss, Souss estuary, adult, 31 December. **Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides* 2002 (02/02) Rharb, Sebou estuary, 20 January. 2002 (02/09) Souss, Agadir harbour, second-winter, 21 January. **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteinii* 2002 (02/01) Middle Draa, Tissint, 12, 31 December. **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* 2000 (00/22) Lower Draa, Goulimine, 29 November. **Plain Swift** *Apus unicolor* 2002 (02/08) Souss, Agadir, 16 January. 2002 (02/38) Haha, Cape Rhir, several dozen, 11 April. **Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni* 2001 (01/06) Oued Ad-Deheb, Aoussard, two, 29 April. **Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula* 2001 (01/27) Tafilalt, Erg Chebbi, 12 March. 2001 (01/28) Tafilalt, Taouz, 13 March. 2001 (01/29) Eastern High Atlas, between Midelt and Errachidia, 11 March. 2002 (02/20) Saharan Atlas, Figuig, two, 15 April. 2003 (03/22) Central High Atlas, Gorges du Todra, 10 April. **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* 2003 (03/21) Tafilalt, Skoura, 9 April; Jorf, 10 April; Merzouga, 12 April; Derkaoua-Erfoud, two, 12 April. **Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio phoeni-*

curvirostris 2001 (01/31) Tangier Peninsula, Ksar Sghir, August.

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